

General Certificate of Education
June 2005
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 1

SCY1

Wednesday 25 May 2005 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is SCY1.
- This paper is divided into **three** Sections. Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.

SECTION A – FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

1

Total for this Section: 60 marks

Item 1A

Some sociologists argue that we are now living in a postmodern society in which family and household forms are becoming increasingly diverse. For example, Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) identify five types of family diversity in Britain. These include differences such as whether conjugal roles are joint or segregated, and social class differences in child-rearing practices. There are also differences in the proportion of lone-parent families among different social groups. 5

Other sociologists, such as Judith Stacey (1998), go further. She argues that families have now become so diverse that it is no longer possible to identify a particular family form as ‘typical’ in the way that it once was. In fact, family structures are becoming so fluid, unstable and open to change that it is becoming increasingly difficult to classify them at all. 10

Item 1B

Domestic violence accounts for about a quarter of all violent crime. Catriona Mirrlees-Black (1996) estimates that there are 6.6 million domestic assaults a year, mostly on women.

These findings confirm those of Russell and Rebecca Dobash (1979). They found that most of the women they interviewed had not experienced violence until after they were married. Violence was often triggered by what a husband saw as a threat to his position, such as his wife failing to cook his food in the way he preferred it. Dobash and Dobash claim that marriage justifies domestic violence by giving men power over their wives. According to David Cheal (1991), the police are often reluctant to become involved because they see the family as a ‘private’ sphere and assume that women are free to leave if they are experiencing abuse. 10

Sociologists have identified other patterns of domestic violence: for example, Mirrlees-Black found that one in seven men has been assaulted, and that children and those on low incomes are also at greater risk.

- (a) Explain what is meant by a “household” (**Item 1A**, line 2). (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **two** reasons for “differences in the proportion of lone-parent families among different social groups” (**Item 1A**, lines 5 – 6). (4 marks)
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons for “social class differences in child-rearing practices” (**Item 1A**, lines 4 – 5). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why “family and household forms are becoming increasingly diverse” (**Item 1A**, lines 1 – 2). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the ways in which social policies and laws may influence families and households. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 1B** and elsewhere, assess the view that marriage remains a patriarchal institution. (20 marks)

SECTION B – HEALTH

2

Total for this Section: 60 marks**Item 2A**

There are significant gender differences in health chances, in terms of both morbidity and mortality. For example, in developed countries women outlive men by an average of 6.5 years. These gender differences extend to mental health. In surveys, women are more likely to report that they are prone to anxiety, depression and psychological distress. More women are diagnosed as suffering from mental illnesses and more are admitted to hospital for treatment. 5

Sociologists such as Szasz argue that the term ‘mental illness’ is inappropriate to describe many of these psychological problems. In his view, illnesses or diseases are physical. With the exception of certain brain diseases, most so-called mental illnesses are not physical and so are not illnesses. Rather, they are simply behaviours that other people object to. From this viewpoint, mental illness is a social construct. 10

Item 2B

Working-class people on average die younger and suffer more illness and disability than middle-class people. According to the materialist explanation, these inequalities are the result of factors such as income, employment and unemployment, housing and other aspects of the social and physical environment. Working-class people are more likely to live in poor quality accommodation in more polluted environments; they earn lower incomes and are more likely to be out of work. These poverty-related factors damage their health. 5

This is sometimes also referred to as the structuralist explanation of health inequality, since it sees the unequal structure of society as the underlying cause. However, it has been claimed that in countries such as Britain, material poverty is no longer the major reason for class inequalities in health. For example, some sociologists see cultural or behavioural factors as more important. 10

- (a) Explain what is meant by a “social construct” (**Item 2A**, line 11). (2 marks)
- (b) Explain the difference between “morbidity” and “mortality” (**Item 2A**, lines 1 – 2). (4 marks)
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons why “women outlive men” (**Item 2A**, line 2). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why women are more likely than men to be diagnosed and/or treated for mental illnesses (**Item 2A**, lines 4 – 6). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the reasons why some ethnic groups in Britain experience worse health than others. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the materialist explanation of class inequalities in health. (20 marks)

Turn over ►

SECTION C – MASS MEDIA

3

Total for this Section: 60 marks**Item 3A**

Certain social groups often suffer negative stereotyping. For example, the lower classes are often presented as social security ‘scroungers’, or as being responsible for their own fate.

Age, too, is represented in particular ways. For example, the very old are under-represented in prime time TV drama, and are often portrayed as difficult, forgetful or feeble. Featherstone and Wernick (1995) argue that images of old age avoid the subject of dying, and magazines such as *Retirement Choice* present an image of the ‘young-old’ enjoying a kind of perpetual middle age. 5

On the other hand, pluralists argue that formal and informal controls exist that may prevent the media from portraying individuals and groups negatively. Many sociologists also argue that media representations of previously stereotyped groups, such as gays and lesbians, the old, ethnic minorities and women, are now becoming more positive. 10

Item 3B

According to Marxists, the mass media are a key means by which the ruling class ensure that their ideas dominate society. Media output is ideologically biased in favour of capitalist interests. Advertising persuades us that we need the latest consumer goods, often by associating them with desirable lifestyles that we are encouraged to aspire to. Politically, the media set the agenda by excluding viewpoints hostile to capitalism. 5

Critics disagree, arguing that the great variety of media sources now available offers consumers a choice of products where all viewpoints are represented. However, despite this apparent diversity, a handful of capitalist corporations control media output. According to Bagdikian (1997), ten companies together dominate media ownership in the USA. This has fallen from fifty in the 1980s and, with deregulation, globalisation and digital technology, looks likely to decline further. 10

- (a) Explain what is meant by “stereotyping” (**Item 3A**, line 1). (2 marks)
- (b) Identify **two** possible controls over the media’s portrayal of individuals or groups (**Item 3A**, lines 8 – 9). (4 marks)
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons why representations of previously stereotyped groups may now be becoming more positive (**Item 3A**, lines 10 – 11). (6 marks)
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why the lower classes are often portrayed negatively by the mass media (**Item 3A**, lines 1 – 2). (8 marks)
- (e) Examine the ways in which audiences respond to the messages produced by the mass media. (20 marks)
- (f) Using material from **Item 3B** and elsewhere, assess the view that capitalist ownership of the mass media means that their output is inevitably biased. (20 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS